THE SYSTEM OF Grace, and Free-will;

As 'tis held in the Catholick Church, and the Church of *England*; propoſed, and vindicated.

IN A

Viſitation Sermon.

By *STEPHEN NYE.*

LONDON,
Printed for *J. Robinſon* at the Golden Lion in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, and *A. Bell* at the Croſs Keys and Bible in *Cornhil.* 1700.

The Syſtem of Grace, and Free-will; as it is held in the Catholick Church, and the Church of *England.*

1 Cor. xv. 10.

Not I, but the Grace of God, which was with *me.*

THE liberty, or *neceſſity* of Human Actions, hath been a warm Controverſy; a very doubtful, and perplex'd Inquiry; as well among Divines, as Philoſophers.

The Philoſophers that ſaid, all our Actions are neceſſitated, offer'd for their Opinion; chiefly that, as the Underſtanding always, and neceſſarily imbraceth (ſeeming) *Truth*; ſo the Will chooſeth, and cannot but chooſe, what ſeemeth *good*, and *beſt*. In ſhort, the Will ever followeth the preſent

Dictate of the Understanding: what to the Understanding (for the present) seemeth *Truth*, or *good*; the Will cannot but approve, and practice. From these Maxims, it follows that, all Errors are *involuntary*, and all our Choices *necessary*.

But more generally the Philosophers denied this *fatality* of Truth and Error, of Good and Evil; and some of them with a particular Zeal. They are the words of *Alexander Aphrodisiensis*, in his excellent Book *de fato* to the Emperors *Antonini*. "*Si fatum*, "*tum non sunt laudationes & vituperationes*; "*at si istæ non sunt, non est bonum vel malum* "*morale: & si ista non sunt, profecto nec Dii.* *i. e.* If there be *Fate*, then there is neither Praise nor Dispraise; but if these are not, neither can there be *moral* Good or Evil: and if not these, neither truly are there Gods, or a Divine Nature. Therefore these Philosophers denied, that the Understanding *always* affects, or *necessarily* submits to TRUTH: and much more that the Will *necessarily* imbraces apparent GOOD, or what seems BEST. It is too well known, *said they*, that; we are so far from always seeking, or necessarily submitting to *Truth*; that we are even afraid ordinarily, and very shie, of being convinced of some (unconvenient) Truths. And hence it is, that 'tis seen in daily Experience, that; Men as readily and easily

eaſily ſhut the Eye of the Underſtanding againſt (unwelcome) Truths; as they can ſhut the bodily Eye againſt Light; and thereby exclude it. I may add, not only particular Men, but whole Nations do this. Can there be a more bright Truth than, that; a piece of Bread is not a human Body? And yet againſt this, ſo many Nations have ſhut the Eye of the Underſtanding; believing that a (conſecrated) *Wafer* is the *real* Body of Chriſt. In ſhort, Intereſt, or even only Prepoſſeſſion, often diſpoſes Men to reject the very cleareſt Truths.

As to the other, that; the Will *always*, and *neceſſarily* imbraces apparent GOOD, and what ſeems BEST: the Philoſophers oppoſed it by divers Arguments. Whereever there is Prudence, *ſay they*, and *Reaſon*; there is alſo *a Power of deliberating*: and where Deliberation is, there can be no Conſtraint, no Neceſſity of any ſort; if there were, there would be no deliberating. And whereas ſome urge, that, *after deliberating*, we always and alſo neceſſarily chooſe what ſeems GOOD, or BEST. That we *always* chooſe it, if it were true, yet were not to the purpoſe: For I may *always* chooſe a thing, and yet I may chooſe it freely, and not as *conſtrained* or *fatally*. But it is not true, that we always chooſe what is Good or Beſt; for ſometimes, only *to ſhow that we are*

free, and not determined fatally by the Goodneſs or Excellence of an Object or Choice, but by an ἀυτοκίνησις, an arbitrary or ſelf-movement; or out of *mere Wantonneſs, and Game*; we chooſe, or do, not what is Good or Beſt, but what hath ſome unconvenience.

And, if it were neceſſary to the Will, to chooſe what (for the preſent) appears to the Underſtanding to be Good, or Beſt; we could *never* adviſe, conſult, or deliberate at all: for the Underſtanding ſees at *firſt view*, a Goodneſs in ſome things, and in others that they are beſt *in ſome reſpects*. It tarrieth for all that, it ſuſpends its Action and Choice; it adviſeth, whether there be not ſomething ſtill *better*: it may be the Conſideration and Election is laid by, for days, or weeks, or even for years; which ſheweth that the Goodneſs or even the Excellence of things, doth not neceſſarily and inevitably diſpoſe us to Choice, or Action. It ſeems impertinent, to renew here the Exception, that, let the Conſideration or Election be delayed never ſo long, we ſhall at laſt neceſſarily chooſe what ſhall ſeem *Good*, and *Beſt*: for I demand, why *now*, more than *before*? what ſeem'd Good and Beſt, did not before *neceſſarily* determine me, therefore neither can it *now*, merely becauſe 'tis Good or Beſt.

Again,

Again, the moſt perfect Being of all, GOD; who judgeth what is Good, and *Beſt*, unerringly; doth not always chooſe the *Beſt*. He could have made the World, and every Creature in it, more perfect than they are: he could have made the World bigger, Mankind more numerous, and *morally* better: He could have made us all impeccable, as the Saints in Heaven are: He could have provided that there ſhould neither be *Sin* nor *Miſery* in the World. That he hath not choſe theſe *beſt* things; beſt as well to himſelf, as to the Creature; was from the *Freedom* of his Will. And if thus the Will of the moſt perfect Mind, is free to chooſe; is not obliged *neceſſarily*, by *the Light* in his Underſtanding; much leſs are our *leſs perfect Minds:* becauſe, having *leſs Light* in our Underſtanding; our Underſtanding can *but feebly* influence our Will: ſo far will it be, from neceſſarily determining it.

As Philoſophy has been always ſtudied together with Divinity, 'tis obvious to obſerve that many Divines, and very potent Parties of Chriſtians, have followed in the Queſtion now before us, the ſenſe of the particular Philoſophers, or Sects of Philoſophy, whom they admired. For ſome have contended for it, that we have a τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, an Αὐτεξούσιον; an abſolute, and arbitrary

Freedom of Will, to chooſe Evil or *Good*, and to refuſe. While others have ſaid, on the contrary, that all Men are under ſome ſuch *natural*, or (if you will) *moral* Impotence; that we cannot chooſe or will Good, without the Grace of God, exciting us, and aſſiſting us, *by irreſiſtible Acts*. The firſt of theſe is *Pelagianiſm*; the other hath had ſeveral Names, but ſince the Reformation, it hath been called *Calviniſm*, now (more commonly) *Janſeniſm*. What I take to be the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and of the Church of *England* (and is a *middle*, between the Extremes of *Janſeniſm* and *Pelagianiſm*) but is not very commonly obſerved, or not ſo dexterouſly propoſed; I ſhall repreſent and vindicate by and by. At preſent, I obſerve only in general, that the Catholick Church diſapproves the Concluſions of the Philoſophers, as well of the one, as the other ſide. The Church doth not think, the ordinary (*the civil*) Choices or Actions are in any degree neceſſitated; but that there is a liberty of Action, and Choice: A liberty, that is grounded on the *Prudence*, and *Reaſonableneſs of our Natures*, and the (conſequent) *Power of deliberating*. And yet, neither doth ſhe believe, that the Human Reaſon, Underſtanding, or Will, is *ſincere* and *ſound*: the Depravation by original Sin is ſuch, that we cannot chooſe

Spiritual Good, or affect *Divine Truths*; by the *natural* ſtrength of our (corrupted) Wills, and Underſtandings; but by the Power and Aſſiſtance of Grace only.

The Diſpute concerning Grace, and the Powers of the Human Will, began ſhortly after the year 400. and was firſt managed by St. *Jerom*, and St. *Auſtin*, on the one ſide; and on the other, by *Pelagius*, *Cæleſtius* and *Julianus*. In the ſame Age, tho much later in the Century, it was argued on the one hand, by *Joannes Caſſianus*, *Vincentius Lirinenſis*, and *Fauſtus* of *Rhiez*: on the other by *Proſper*, and *Fulgentius*; beſides others of leſs note. In the next, and the following Ages, there were on the *Pelagian* ſide (ſoftned by *J. Caſſianus* into *Semi-pelagianiſm*) *Hilary* and *Leontius*, Archbiſhops of *Arles*; *Rabanus*, *Hincmarus*, *J. Scotus*; and divers *Councils*. On the contrary ſide, were *Remigius*, *Lupus*, *Ratramnus*, *Godeſchalcus*; beſides not a few Councils. Of the Divines of the Schools, St. *Thomas*; of the Orders of the Church, the *Dominicans*; were great Aſſerters of Grace: allowing ſcarce any thing, if any thing, to Free-will, and our *natural* Powers. But the *Franciſcans*, and it may be the greater number of the School-Divines, tho they believed the Grace of God is *neceſſary*; yet they could not agree to it, that nothing is to be done, or

can

can be done, by the Human Will and Endeavour. Shortly after the Reformation, this Queſtion was diſputed afreſh, by the *Jeſuits*, *Socinians*, and *Remonſtrants*, againſt the *Dominicans*, *Calviniſts*, and *Janſeniſts*.

I am not aware, that there is any enquiry, that more deſerves a careful and heedful Diſcuſſion, than this concerning Grace, and Free-will. If, either we our ſelves do not rightly underſtand it, or our People do not apprehend, what is our meaning; 'tis impoſſible they ſhould make ſenſe of what they hear in this place. They can neither underſtand the Publick Prayers, eſpecially the Collects; nor our Sermons, and Exhortations to them. For ſometimes they are told they muſt forſake Sin, and muſt follow after Righteouſneſs; or 'tis not poſſible they ſhould be ſaved. 'Tis well, but they are told alſo, they themſelves can do nothing of all this: it muſt be *Grace*, if *perhaps* God will grant it to them, whereby only they can leave Sin, or can follow Righteouſneſs. But what ſenſe do we ſuppoſe can they make of theſe two Sayings; and what Troubles muſt theſe Doctrines raiſe in the Mind; when we conſider them with any heed? I muſt forgo every Sin, I muſt always do the thing that is right and good: and yet *I cannot do it*, but only by God's Grace given to me; nor is *that* Grace

Grace in my Power to procure it: 'Tis the *free* Gift of God, to whomſoever he giveth it.; and alas, how many have it not; or rather, how (*very*) few have it?

And what follows from this? Why, that, all our Exhortations and Reproofs, are to no purpoſe: unleſs we could alſo (at the ſame time) give to the Perſons reproved and exhorted *Grace*; to comply. It ſeems alſo to follow, that; it became not *the Wiſdom* of God, to give any Laws, or Rule of holy Living; to Perſons who are utterly uncapable of obeying: without that Grace which is beſtowed, *but on ſome*, and *but ſometimes*. It ſhould ſeem, we can as little defend *the Sincerity* of God; in profeſſing that, *He willeth not that any ſhould periſh*; and that *he willeth, that all may be ſaved*. For the condition of Salvation, being *Obedience*; and *that* Condition, not practicable but by *Grace*: it muſt needs be underſtood, that God willeth thoſe Perſons ſhould periſh, to whom he doth not give his Grace.

There is no ſaying, in the caſe; let 'em *pray* for God's Grace. For all, that aſſert the neceſſity of Grace to every *good* Action, and Diſpoſition, are obliged to maintain, and do maintain that; the *Affectus Orandi*, the hearty Diſpoſition to pray for Grace or other ſpiritual Good, can ariſe only, from Grace, aforehand given to the Perſon ſo praying.

praying. Or will you ſend them for Grace to the holy Sacrament? But our Books ſeem all to agree in it, that; I know not how many Graces are pre-required; that one may ſo receive the Sacrament of the Altar, as not to be damned thereby. It might have been ſaid, however: an honeſt Intention, and reverent Performance, are ſufficient Preparation, and Qualification for that Sacrament, or other Goſpel-Ordinance.

The Subject we are upon will not admit of further prefacing. As I ſaid therefore, I ſhall now propound *a Middle*, between the two Extremes, of *Pelagianiſm* and *Janſeniſm*. The Doctrine, I take it, of the Catholick Church: a Syſtem concerning Grace, and the Human Will, which is clear of all the Difficulties, whether *Theological* or *Philoſophical*, hitherto mentioned. It may be coucht in theſe (few) Articles; and Texts, and Arguments, that ſupport them.

" 1. Whatſoever *Good* we will, or do, " is neither done nor *willed*, without God's " Grace; his Grace moving us thereto, and " *aſſiſting* us therein. This Article is directly againſt the *Pelagians*, that hold the *abſolute* Freedom, and *arbitrary* Power of Man's Will. And it ſeemeth very plainly expreſſed, or clearly *implied*, in theſe (following) Texts.

Out

Out of the *Old* Teſtament. *Pſal.* 119. 35, 36. *Incline my Heart, O Lord, to thy Teſtimonies. Make me to go in the way of thy Commandments.* Jer. 31. 33. ſaith GOD there: *I will put my Law into their inward Parts; I will write it on their Hearts.* Ezek. 36. 26. *A new Heart will I give them, a new Spirit will I put into them.* Lam. 5. 21. *Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord; and we ſhall be turned.*

Out of the *New* Teſtament. *John* 6. 44. *No Man can come unto me,* ſaith our Saviour there, *except the Father, who ſent me, draw him.* Acts 16. 14. *The Lord opened the Heart of* Lydia, *that ſhe attended to the things, which were ſpoken by* Paul. 2 Tim. 2 25. *If peradventure, God will give to them Repentance.* 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not ſufficient, as of our ſelves, to think any thing; our ſufficiency is of God.* Phil. 3. 13. *It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good Pleaſure.* Heb. 13. 21. *The Lord make you perfect, in every good Work; working in you, that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight.* 1 Cor. 15. 10. (being the words of our preſent Text) *Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

Theſe Texts, as I ſaid, either expreſs, or *imply*, theſe two things. *That*, we are under a Diſability, however it hath happened, to do, or ſo much as to *will* that which is good;

good; by our own Strength, or *Endeavour* of any ſort: And that 'tis by the Grace of God, given to us, that we are diſpoſed to do, or even to *will* Good.

But for the right, and full apprehending this firſt Article; 'tis to be noted, that: By the Grace of God, is ſometimes meant, *the Act*; and ſometimes, *the Habit* of Grace.

The *Act* of Grace, is any Operation, or *Motion of the Divine Spirit, upon our Spirits*; whereby it *exciteth* us to Good, or *enables* us therein. The *Habit* of Grace, is the gracious, or *good frame of Mind*; that is begot in us, by the many *former* good purpoſes and *Acts*; that had been cauſed in us, by the *particular* Motions, or Actings of the Divine Spirit.

If the *Pelagians*, or *Semipelagians*, had obſerved this; they would not have alledged, the purpoſe of King *David*, to build a Temple to God: nor St. *Paul*'s eſſaying to preach the Goſpel in *Bithynia*. They would not have pleaded, that God forbad *David*; and forbad that Apoſtle to execute their Purpoſes: and that *therefore*, tho they were indeed *good* purpoſes; of neceſſity, they proceeded not from *a motion of God's Spirit*. That God forbad them, ſheweth indeed; thoſe Purpoſes came not, from what we have called, the *Act* of Grace; namely, a *particular* Motion of the Divine Spirit. But they

might, and *did* proceed, from *the Habit* of Grace: from the gracious, or *holy Frame* of their Minds, that had been wrought in 'em, by *former* Motions, and Operations of the Spirit. In ſhort, I ſay; every *good* Purpoſe, as well as good Action, is from Grace: either from *that* Grace, which is a *particular* Motion of the holy Spirit: Or, from the *Habit* of Grace; that ariſeth from the many *former* Motions of the Divine Spirit; and diſpoſes us to well-doing, in the general.

'Tis very plain, I think, that this Reflection fully and clearly anſwers to that Exception; raiſed from *David*'s, and *Paul*'s holy Purpoſes, which God forbad. For we do not ſay, that; all good Intentions, and Actions, are from the *Act* of Grace: which is a *particular* Motion of God's Spirit. No, many *good* Actions, as well as Purpoſes, are from *the Habit* of Grace; even that *good Frame* of Mind, that was generated by ſome *former* Actings of God's Spirit.

I need only to add here, that; tho the Inſtances of *David*, and of *Paul*, do not prove that, we can deſign *Good*, much leſs can *do* it, without Divine Grace: Yet they prove, with certainty, the Doctrine of the Church, that; *good* Actions, or Deſigns may proceed from the mere *Habit* of Grace; from a reformed, renewed, regenerate Heart or Mind, without a particular Motion of the Spirit

of

of God. For had thoſe *good* Purpoſes of *David* and *Paul* iſſued from an *immediate* and *particular* Motion of the Divine Spirit, called the *Act* of Grace; 'tis not imaginable they would have been forbid, as we ſee they were, 2 *Sam.* 7. 5. *Acts* 16. 17. I am perſuaded alſo, *this* is our Saviour's meaning, in thoſe words, *Mat.* 12. 35. *A good Man, out of the good Treaſure of his Heart, bringeth forth good things:* q. d. the *renewed, reformed Frame* of the Heart, doth as eaſily and naturally yield *ſutable* Actions; as an ill Man from his vitiated corrupt Heart, vomiteth evil Actions, Deſigns, and Words.

2. What ought to be chiefly obſerved and inſiſted on, but is commonly overlook'd, by the Managers of the Diſpute concerning Grace and Free-will: I ſay, what is moſt material in this Diſpute, is. "The Grace of "God, ſufficient to Converſion; and ſuch "*a Frame* of the Heart, as we have juſt "now deſcribed; is common to all: Is ſo "given to all, that no Perſon doth miſcarry, "but by a *wilful* neglect or diſ-uſe of the "Grace given to him. Let us *briefly*, but *effectually* prove this Article; it will diſſolve moſt of the Difficulties, that are objected, by contending Parties, through this whole Queſtion.

For a *general* Proof of it, we may obſerve, that: As *ſo* many Texts do aver the neceſſi-

neceſſity of God's Grace, to enable us to do, or to *will* that which is good. Many *more* (*expreſs*) Texts require of ALL, *Repentance* and *Well-doing:* and other Texts declare, 'tis much againſt the Will of God, that any ſhould periſh. Therefore theſe latter Texts plainly ſuppoſe *an univerſal Grace* of God, a general, common Grace, given to all. For it were a moſt *wretched* Impertinence, or a manifeſt *Mockery*, to *command all Men, every where, to repent*; which are the *expreſs* words of holy Scripture: Or to blame, and upbraid them for want of *Faith*, or of *Righteouſneſs*. And yet much more to *damn* them for the lack of theſe things; profeſſing in the mean time, that God willeth not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould be ſaved. I ſay, this were an *open* Mockery, or an Impertinence, if there were not a *common* and *general* Grace of God: in the uſe of which, we can do, as is required of us; can *believe, repent*, and *do Righteouſneſs*.

I take this to be a very ſolid *Proof* of univerſal Grace; namely that, univerſal Grace is *ſuppoſed*, and is *implied* in the Commands, and Reproofs of the Divine Word. In the Exhortations uſed to All at preſent; and in the Judgment that God will paſs at laſt on all impenitent, unreformed Perſons. And finally, in the *repeated* Profeſſions, made

by God, that; he willeth not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould be ſaved. 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. *He willeth all Men ſhould be ſaved.* 2 Pet. 3. 9. *Not willing, that any ſhould periſh; but that all ſhould come to Repentance.* He even confirmeth this with *an Oath*, paſſed to us. Ezek. 33. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord; I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.*

Nor does there want *particular* Proof of univerſal Grace; or that, *ſufficient, ſaving* Grace is given to all. John 1. 16. *Of his Fulneſs we have all received* χάριν, ἀντὶ χάριτος· *Grace upon Grace*, or *abundant Grace*, or (as *Grotius* here) *Grace gratis.* Epheſ. 4. 7. *Unto every one of us is Grace given, according to the meaſure of the Gift of Chriſt.* Titus 2. 11. *The Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation*, ἐπιφάνη πᾶσιν Ανθρώποις· illuxit omnibus hominibus; *hath ſhone out unto all Men.* So that, the Grace of God (that Grace which bringeth Salvation) whatſoever we take it to be, or whereinſoever we imagine it doth conſiſt; it hath appeared, hath ſhone out unto *all* Men. Some critical Interpreters render this Text, rather more to our preſent purpoſe, thus: "The Grace of "God, that bringeth Salvation to *all Men*, "hath appeared. And this rendring more nearly follows the order of the words in the Original Greek. It

It is true, ſome of theſe Texts may be taken in a ſenſe different from what we have pretended to: it will be found notwithſtanding, that, however taken, they do not leſs favour the Doctrine we are proving. For inſtance, admitting that, the words of St. *Paul*; "The Grace of God, *that bringeth* "*Salvation unto all*, hath appeared; may be underſtood of *the Goſpel*, which is here called *the Grace of God*, in the opinion of divers. The *Goſpel*, ſay they; the external or *outward* Grace of God, is here meant; not the *inward* Grace, of which our preſent Queſtion is. I ſay, admitting that, the *Goſpel* is here meant; yet this Text ſuppoſes an *univerſal, inward Grace of God*. For even in the opinion of thoſe who underſtand this Text of *the Goſpel*, the mere *outward* Goſpel doth not bring Salvation to *any*; but *the Goſpel, as accompanied by the internal Grace*, that maketh it effectual: So that, if it be true, what the Apoſtle ſaith; "That the "Goſpel, *that bringeth Salvation to all*, hath "appeared: it muſt be true, that, an *univerſal* (internal) Grace goes along with it. And this indeed was the Opinion of the antient Doctors; who all believed, that: the internal Grace of God doth *always* accompany the holy Word, Ordinances, or *Goſpel*, to make it effectual *to all ſuch, as reſiſt not the offer'd Grace*; the Grace that

follows the Word, and other Divine Inſtitutions.

The Arguments we have alledged, may ſerve, I think, to caution us againſt a common Miſtake, in our way of ſpeaking. For when we ſee, or hear of ſome very ill *Action*, or *courſe of Life*, by any Perſon or Perſons; we ſay ordinarily thereupon, *yes, for want of Grace:* Implying that ſuch Sinner had not Grace. But the *particular*, and eſpecially the *general* Proof that we have given, of the univerſality of Grace, ought (as I ſaid) to caution us againſt that *vulgar Error*, in Speech. When others ſin, let us ſay, according to the Truth; not, he *wanted Grace*; but, he *uſed not*, or *he neglected* the Grace common to *all:* Even as we ſay of Prodigals, or Ill-huſbands; not, that they *have not* Reaſon, or *cannot* conſider; but, as the truth is, they *uſe not* their Reaſon, and *uſe not* the power of Conſideration common to *all* Men.

3. It hath appeared, I ſuppoſe, that; the Grace of God is *neceſſary* to all, and hath ſhone out *unto all:* but we muſt now add further, that: "This Grace doth not operate "*in an unreſiſtible manner*, but in a way "ſutable to our Reaſonable Natures; that "is to ſay, in the way of *moral Suaſion.* Let us again, in few words, prove the former; and explain the other, even Moral Suaſion.

I ſaid, the Grace of God doth not operate in us in an irreſiſtible manner: it will gently and ſweetly move; not conſtrain and force, in a phyſical way. The Divine Grace moves us, ſo agreeably, and in a way ſo ſoft, and natural; that "We cannot diſtin-"guiſh its Motions upon our Minds, from "our own Thoughts, and the proper "Movements of our own Spirits. We may reſiſt, reject, and refuſe the Grace; by which we ſhould be either converted, or bettered; as we may, and often do, the different Thoughts, and various Counſels, of our own Minds. That we can refuſe the Grace, and Spirit of God, ſtriving with us, for our good, is clear in a great many Texts: I ſhall need to inſtance but in ſome, that are particularly remarkable. Ezek. 12. 2. *They have Ears to hear, and hear not; they have Eyes to ſee, and ſee not; becauſe they are a rebellious Houſe.* Acts 7. 51. *Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in Heart; ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt.* It even appears that, *all* Grace, both external and *internal*, is uſed to ſome, who notwithſtanding ſo reject it, as not to be bettered in the leaſt by it. *Iſa.* 5.8. *What could I have done more*, ſaith the Lord, *to my Vineyard* (the Houſe of *Iſrael*) *that I have not done? Wherefore then, when I expected it ſhould bring forth Grapes, hath it brought forth wild Grapes?*

As to the other, that; the Grace and Spirit of God, do work in the way of *moral Suaſion.* The meaning hereof is; we are excited to Good, by the Spirit's repreſenting to our Minds *ſuch Arguments*, and in *ſuch ſeaſonable Opportunities*, as are *ſufficient* to perſuade, and to diſpoſe us, to chooſe this *good* way, and to refuſe the contrary *evil.* The Divine Spirit firſt *ſuggeſts* good Thoughts, and then, proper Arguments and Motives: it *brightens* alſo thoſe Arguments, to give to them the greater force. What we *hear*, what we *read*, the *Mercies* of God, and his *Judgments:* the Spirit repreſents all theſe in the *fitteſt* time, and *beſt* manner; in a more effectual manner, than *Human* Wit and Endeavour can. If we ſhould ſay alſo, the Spirit ſometimes *elevates our Minds*; clears 'em, and (as it were) *enlightens* 'em, by an extraordinary Act: we ſhould thereby ſpeak, not diſagreeably to *not a few* Expreſſions of holy Scripture. Briefly, *moral Suaſion* is no other thing, but *reaſonable Perſuaſion.* I ſay, reaſonable Perſuaſion; by the *Word taught*, by *holy Readings*, by *Heavenly Suggeſtions*; by *Favours*, by *Chaſtiſements:* and by that Long-ſufferance, and *Patience* of the Lord; that ſubdues, and wins ingenuous Minds. " All theſe, and all " ſuch like, repreſented to our Minds; after " a Divine manner, by the Spirit of God, " *which always accompanies them*; are what " is

" is called, moral Suaſion, or reaſonable Per-
" ſuaſion; or God's Spirit, or Grace, acting
" by moral Suaſion.

It was thus, that *the Lord opened the Heart of* Lydia, to hearken to *Paul.* The Diſcourſe, and Reaſonings of *Paul*, were (as I ſaid) *brightned* upon her Mind; and her Mind it ſelf was *cleared*, and *elevated* by the Divine Spirit. There is no Hearer but often experiences this Power of the Spirit, on his Mind; and it may be, divers times, during one reading or hearing.

Let us ſee to it, that we *reſiſt not the Holy Ghoſt*; as the Apoſtle hath ſaid, that we *quench not the Spirit*; but comply with, and be led by, thoſe his bleſſed Motions. Which brings me to another Article; very neceſſary to a right Apprehenſion, of this (much litigated) Enquiry concerning Grace, and the Powers of the Human Will.

4. 'Tis neceſſary towards well-doing, and towards Converſion to Good, that; *we* receive, and embrace the Motions and Strivings of Grace, and of the Divine Spirit, with our Spirits. 'Tis neceſſary that, *our* Wills do accept offered Grace; that *we* will and endeavour to be good. For *our* Wills (*excited*, and *quickened* by Grace) *can will Good*, and *endeavour* it: in a word, can comply with the Intention of the Divine Spirit; moving us to Good.

There

There is *an opening of the Heart*, on our part; as well as on the part of God; ſaith that Text, *Rev.* 3. 20. *I ſtand at the door, and knock*; ſaith our Saviour there to the Churches; *if any Man will open unto me, I will come in.* Some other Texts ſpeak more plainly. Jer. 4. 4. *Circumciſe your ſelves to the Lord; take away the fore-skin of your Hearts.* Ezek. 18. 31. *Caſt away, from you, your Tranſgreſſions; make you a new Heart, and a new Spirit.* When theſe Texts bid us, to *open the door* of the Heart, to *put away the fore-skin* of the Heart; nay, to *make us a new Heart*, and a new Spirit: they evidently ſuppoſe our *Free-will*; and *Power of co-operating*, with Grace. That is to ſay, *as our Will is made free*, and *is enabled* to co-operate; by that Grace that is given, and *is continued* to All.

I ſaid, and *is continued*, to All. For our *preſent* Life having been given to us, in order to our Salvation: 'tis reaſonable to think, that; "*The term of Life, and the* "*day of Grace, are co-extended.* The Grace of God, I ſay, is not withdrawn; while our Life is indulged to us: and leaſt of all, from *ſuch as are in fear*, that they have outſinned the (ſuppoſed) term of Grace; for ſuch a Fear implies *many Graces*, as particularly Repentance and Faith. I confeſs however, *this* Point hath conſiderable Difficulties;

ties; and we need not, to affirm it. That Text before quoted; *If peradventure God will give to them, Repentance*; may ſeem to imply, that. Some Perſons may have ſinned ſo obſtinately; that is to ſay, ſo *long*, and ſo *audaciouſly*: that it will pleaſe God, to withdraw from them that Grace, which is ſufficient to convert, and change them.

And this, at length, is that Syſtem; Scheme, or Account, concerning Grace and Free-will: that, as I ſaid, at firſt, is free of all the Incumbrances; that ſo much diſtreſs the other two Schemes. The Scheme, I mean, of the *Pelagians*; who maintain an *arbitrary* and *abſolute* Free-will, to *Good* as well as Evil: which has been condemned, as Hereſy; by the Catholick Church. And the Scheme of the *Janſeniſts*, who admit only of an unreſiſtible Grace: a Grace, that never operates but by an *Omnipotent Act*; and which, they ſay, is given *but to few*. What we have advanced, to the contrary of both theſe, may be abridg'd; into theſe two Propoſitions. The Human Will; made free by *Acts*, or by *the Habit*, of Grace; can will, and do GOOD. And, this Grace is given *to all*; if alſo it be not *continued*, while their Life is.

This Scheme provides, for *the Honour of God*; by aſcribing to his Grace, (as *Janſenius*, and Mr. *Calvin* do) our *whole Power*

of doing, or willing that which is Good. It provides alſo with the other Party, or Free-willers, for *the ſafety of every Perſon:* by ſuppoſing, what the *Pelagians* knew not; an univerſal, ſufficient Grace of God, given to All. "A Grace, that accompanies all the "holy Ordinances; and all other means, of "reclaiming Sinners.

Our Scheme juſtifies alſo *the Wiſdom of God*; in giving Laws, to Perſons diſabled by original Sin: it clears *the ſincerity*, of the eternal King; in profeſſing, that he deſireth the Salvation of all. For his *ſincerity*, as well as his *Wiſdom*, is manifeſted beyond contradiction: by that Grace, which (we have proved) he beſtows on *All*; and that goes along with *all* the Invitations to Good. It ſhows, that we may exhort one another, and be exhorted by our Teachers; to all the Duties, required in the Divine Law. For tho it be moſt true, that; without Grace we can do nothing: this Syſtem informs us (in the words of holy Scripture;) that. *Of his Fulneſs, we have A L L received Grace*, gratis. That, *to every one of us is Grace given.* That, *the Grace of God; that Grace which bringeth Salvation to A L L; hath appeared.*

But this once more. Take away this Suppoſition, of univerſal Grace; and ſee what follows. All *Reproofs* are impertinent, all *Exhortations* to no purpoſe; all *Puniſhment*

is

is both loſt and undeſerved. Becauſe the Perſons for lack of Grace, can act no otherwiſe than they do. The Divine Majeſty hath mocked us; by Laws, that we cannot obey: and by propoſal of Rewards, that we cannot obtain; for want of his Grace. All our Sins, the very worſt of them; together, with our Damnation; are to be imputed, *not* to the wilful neglect of the Sinner. But to *a defect*, of Divine *Mercy*; and *Sincerity*: in withholding neceſſary Grace; and yet profeſſing, that God willeth All ſhould be ſaved. I ought to think, this learned Aſſembly abhors theſe Conſequences; and no leſs ſees their immediate Connexion, with the Doctrine of *partial Grace*; or Grace that is given *but to a few.*

The Opinion of only *partial Grace*, is grounded on *two Diſtinctions*: the moſt ſurprizing (to give them no worſe Name;) that ever were advanced, by Men ſpeaking of GOD. For when we urge the Declarations of God, in the Divine Word; that he WILLETH the Converſion, and Salvation of ALL.

As to the WILLING, they anſwer by the famous Diſtinction; *voluntas ſigni, & beneplaciti.* Of which, the *Engliſh* is this. God indeed makes ſhow, by *external* ſigns; ſuch as exhorting, and reproving; that he willeth the Salvation of thoſe Perſons. But

we are not to judg of his real meaning, by thoſe *Signs:* for tho he exhorts, reproves, and even *ſwears* to them; after all, 'tis his *ſecret* Pleaſure, and *abſolute* Purpoſe, that they ſhall be damned.

As to the ALL; or that, God willeth *All* ſhould be ſaved: they anſwer again, with the Diſtinction; *ſinguli generum, & genera ſingulorum.* In *Engliſh* thus. Not *all Perſons*, but Perſons of *all Orders.* That is to ſay, High and *Low*, Old and *Young*, Men and *Women*; ſome of *all theſe Orders* and Ranks. If now, we ſhould ſuppoſe. The King publiſhes an *Act of Grace*, to all his Subjects; ſaying therein: it is our Will, that they be *All* indemnified; and *not any* of them be puniſh'd for paſt Faults. But *the Judges*, in their executing this Act, interpret it thus. Some Perſons, of *all Ranks* and Orders, ſhall be indemnified; ſhall be reſtored to Eſtate, and Name: ſome, I ſay, of every ſort, and degree, among them. *Women*, as well as Men; *old*, as well as young; *rich*, as well as poor; ſome FEW of *all theſe.* I cannot but think, every body would ſay; ſuch Expounders of the King's Indulgence, do very much abuſe and pervert their Maſter's gracious, and *general* Intentions.

And let us ſee, what it is that has occaſioned the *Janſeniſts*, and other learned Men, to

to betake 'em to ſuch remote, and unſufficient Defences. For all that I remember, 'tis only this. "If God *indeed* willeth, that "ALL ſhould be ſaved; then, ALL *ſhall* "be ſaved: for what God willeth, he hath "all Wiſdom, and Power, to effect it. But "it is certain, ALL ſhall not be ſaved; "therefore, neither doth God *really* will that "they ſhould be ſaved. I ſhall grant, this were home to the purpoſe; if our Scheme ſaid, God willeth abſolutely and poſitively that; ALL *ſhall* be ſaved: without any Conditions, to be performed on their part. But we ſay only, God willeth that, ALL *may* be ſaved; unleſs themſelves will not: that is, unleſs they will not perform the Conditions. God willeth, that ALL be ſaved; How doth he will it? Why, *on the Conditions* or Terms, propoſed in his Word; on the Conditions of *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *newneſs of Life*. Unto which, ALL are called, by his Ordinances; and ALL are enabled, by his Grace, if they will uſe it. The Grace, we mean, that accompanies the holy Ordinances; and all other means of reclaiming, or perfecting us.

In a word, it was never ſaid, as is ſuppoſed in the Objection; that GOD willeth the Salvation, of ALL; or of *Any*, abſolutely, and *unconditionately*: but only, on *this Suppoſition*; that they *uſe the Grace*, where-

whereby he enables 'em to obey him.

And thus, as fully as the Time would allow: I have propoſed, as I undertook, and vindicated; what, I take, to be the Doctrine of the Church; concerning GRACE, and FREE-WILL. I hope, it hath appeared, with ſome clearneſs, that, as *Pelagius* miſtook: in maintaining the *preſent* Freedom, and *abſolute* Power of the Human Will; without *Grace*. So others miſtake, as dangerouſly; as his Error has been judged preſumptuous: while they deny, either *the Univerſality* of God's Grace; or *the Co-operation* of the Human Will, and Endeavour.

FINIS.